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## ANNEX FOR DEFECTIVE DELINQUENTS AT ST. CLOUD

Ralph Rosenberger\*

What is the meaning of defective delinquent?

Many definitions of delinquency may be given. They fall into classes such as sociological, environmental and biological but the one definition we are most interested in is the legal definition. A delinquency is legally defined as any act or omission to act which is prohibited by law and entails a penalty.

But let us go a little further. A delinquent act in the United States, if committed in other parts of the world, might be the object of social approval. A crime in time of peace may constitute an heroic duty on the battlefield. Delinquency in its last analysis is dependant on circumstances, locality and point of view for its existence.

Webster defines defective as wanting in something; imperfect; applied either to natural or moral qualities.

Feeble minded means weak in intellectual power.

Thus a defective delinquent is someone who is weak in intellectual power and has committed an act or acts that society will not condone.

It usually follows that the reason for committing this delinquent act is because of the lack in intellectual power. While I agree in part with this statement, I do not believe that I can go all the way. Because this statement would imply that all people with a lack of intellectual power are potential trouble makers or delinquents and this I do not believe. I do believe that the mentally retarded have individual personalities just like normal people and most of them in the moron classification exhibit a fairly wide spread of personality characteristics. In most cases their delinquent behavior is due to faulty personality characteristics rather than lack of intellectual power. I will go along with the fact that lack of intellectual power is a contributing factor in faulty personality characteristics.

Recent studies which have utilized army draft groups as controls have found that the criminal group does not differ too significantly from the draft population so far as intelligence is concerned. In other words recent research leads to the conclusion that intelligence is not the most important factor in the etiology of criminal behavior.

But in defective delinquents there are certain characteristics of criminal behavior that merit mention because of the insight which these characteristics throw on the general psychodynamics of the feebleminded.

Most defective delinquents have an acute feeling of social inferiority, which in groups of persons with higher intelligence quotients breeds resentment and anti-social feelings. As a result of this inferiority the defective cannot find or fears to approach a willing partner of his own age and turns to juveniles or perversions as a means of sexual outlet or satisfaction.

Austin E. Grigg (psychologist - Virginia state department of correction) in a study comparing defective delinquents with a general prison population came to the conclusion that about 40 percent of the defective delinquents got into trouble

because of impulsive acts; that they react almost reflexadly to the heat of the moment with little regard for future consequences of their present action. The behavior does not exhibit foresight, does not project into the future. Only 19 percent of a general prison group fall into this classification.

Grigg also found that bizarre and illogical crimes may occur among the feeble-minded group as among the psychotic group. In his study 16 percent of the defective delinquents fall into this category while only 2 percent of a general criminal population fall into this category. Forty-four percent of the crimes do not deviate from those observed among delinquents of higher I.Q.

It has also been found that about 70 percent of defective delinquents have at one time or another been arrested for crimes against persons. It appears that the severely retarded adult is impulsive in his interpersonal relations and this factor gets many defectives into trouble. Only about 30 percent of a general prison group fall into this category.

The defective delinquent is also more prone to excessive drinking than those of higher I.Q. levels. This is particularly significant in those cases where environmental circumstances are viscious.

Thus we may conclude that:

1. A higher percentage of defective delinquents get into difficulty because of impulsive reactions to momentary stimuli.
2. The defective delinquent is more liable to be impulsive in interpersonal relations.
3. Bizarre crimes occur among certain defectives as well as psychotics.
4. Criminal acts of a majority of the defectives reflect inability to foresee the future consequences of present actions.
5. Defectives also follow the normal criminal pattern in that they adopt criminal careers in order to augment scanty earnings and as a response to viscious environmental factors.
6. Defective delinquent adults are more prone to excessive use of intoxicants.

Generalizing, defective delinquents do not have the capacity for adequate foresight and thus often react to momentary situations without projecting into the future the overall results of the action. Because of faulty apperception of past events (as observed in memory tests - slow progress in learning, etc.) he carried into a present situation only a rudimentary projection of the past. Thus he is impulsive because it is his nature to react to the present with little ability to project his act either to the past or to the future.

It must be kept in mind that the above are behavior characteristics of the defective delinquent and show some difference between the defective delinquent and the delinquent. Even so one cannot necessarily conclude that lack of intellectual power was the sole cause of the delinquency.

Tredgold, long before child guidance or juvenile psychiatry had come into prominence, stated in his book MENTAL DEFICIENCY, "The child who is brought up in an atmosphere where self is supreme, in which lying, theft, and vice of every kind are rampant, can hardly be expected to acquire those ideals of social obligation and morality which are essential to correct conduct and the stability of a civilized society". His opinion is that anti-social conduct is largely the outcome of poor

environmental factors which tend to provide poor personal characteristics. Many other sociologists, criminologists, and specialists in the field of mental deficiency have made similar statements.

Now if we can go along with those authorities and feel that delinquency is due to faulty personality patterns due to faulty training somewhere along the line in developing personality characteristics and also believe that defective delinquents have personality patterns, then we can justify a training program for them FOR PERSONALITY IS SIMPLY THE PRODUCT OF REPEATED CHOICES. IT IS THE EFFECT OF MANY HABITS.

We feel in dealing with the defective delinquents as in dealing with our delinquents that faulty personality characteristics are the primary causes of their difficulties in making adjustments to society and that those personality characteristics can be altered through retraining and psychotherapy, both group and individual.

In handling delinquent groups, in fact, the whole basis of criminal reformation is based on developing proper social insight through retraining. Through this retraining we feel that faulty personality patterns can be changed to socially accepted patterns. The whole idea is that through retraining proper social insight will come by proper reasoning.

Because of the lack of intellectual power to start with in defective delinquents we do not expect to develop proper social insight by reasoning but by directed programs of correct habit formation. A class in Citizenship has been organized where, by discussion and repetition on what they should and should not do in specific situations, it is hoped certain good responses may become reflex. The instructor takes up these situations by relating actions to a study of a local community--its government, business, religious, educational, and recreational facilities brought down to the level of experience of each individual. Family relationships and responsibilities are considered in the same way as well as those with individuals with whom they come in contact.

In the same way they are taught better personal habits such as cleanliness, good posture, to look at a person when talking to him, to answer when spoken to, as well as those definitely associated with good conduct.

Although the men live in a dormitory separated from the cells of the Reformatory, they work in the various shops with the other men when they are ready to be assigned to individual jobs. First, however, until a man shows he has acquired good work habits and has the ability to learn a specific job, he is placed in a group doing some very simple job such as preparing vegetables.

The Reformatory has a very large enclosure within the walls which makes possible out-of-door activity. Various ball teams are organized with the same efforts made to develop leadership and sportsmanship as with the men of the Reformatory.

There have been a number of these men satisfactorily placed back in the community. The Protestant chaplain has added this job to his other responsibilities. When conduct and ability to work well indicate adjustment outside may be possible, the welfare boards are told of this and in some instances plans in the local community are made with the aid of the welfare board. More often, however, placements are made directly from the Annex without considering the county of settlement--indeed it is frequently best not to make a placement where the man was previously known. The welfare board of the county where placed is notified, but the chaplain keeps as close contact as possible. In fact, in all placements, even when active supervision is by the welfare board, some personal contact is kept by the chaplain, as well

as conferences held by him with the local social worker. Strict rules are set and must be held to. If, for any reason, the placement is unsatisfactory, the Annex sends for the man immediately.

At this time most of the men placed are on farms, but it is interesting to note the number of occupations open to us today needing no great degree of intelligence. The bureau of employment security recently analyzed job openings in 40 industries and reported that 47% of the jobs required no education beyond the ability to read and write. Two thirds of the jobs should be efficiently performed without any special vocational training. A minimum mental age of 6 was required for 19 types of jobs and a great number of jobs are adequately performed by persons with mental ages of 8 to 11.

We have only made a beginning in finding out what may be the potentialities for good adjustment of these men.

Latter part summarized by Mildred Thomson